**4. Plan of Address.**—Addressing, as I do, the Assembly for the first time, I propose to take stock of the administration and to outline roughly the future policy and in doing this I shall incidentally mention what has been done in these directions since I took charge about eight months ago. Travancore has been fortunate in the possession of an uninterrupted succession of able Dewans, and I need hardly say that each one of them has, in his time, contributed his share to the improvement of the administration of the State. Yet it is only a truism to state that, but for the rare foresight and the ripe wisdom of His Highness the Maha Raja, the marvellous co-ordination of the beneficent activities of the several Dewans, whose ideals and view-points must necessarily differ, would have been utterly impossible, and the State would not have been able to achieve that steady progress which is its proud possession to-day. It is therefore in a spirit of reverential humility that I attempt to make a survey of the present situation, and with the help of the fresh experiences we have learnt from the momentous changes in ideals and outlook on life that are so rapidly taking place around us, examine the various problems that confront us for solution and endeavour to solve them in a manner suited to modern conditions and requirements.

**5. Subjects of Survey.**—The domain of administrative activities that I now propose to survey may be conveniently grouped under the following four main heads, *viz.*, (1) the development of the resources of the State and the promotion of the material and moral well-being of the people; (2) the enhancement of the efficiency of the administration; (3) the satisfaction of the civic, political and social aspirations of the people and the removal of inequalities of opportunities for self-advancement among them; and (4) the improvement of the finances of the State.

## DEVELOPMENT OF RESOURCES AND PROMOTION OF MATERIAL AND MORAL WELL-BEING.

**6. Assignment of Land.**—Agriculture is and must remain for a long time to come the staple industry of Travancore, as of the rest of India. It follows then that the paramount duty of the State is to promote this industry on the right lines and by every means in its power. Agricultural prosperity depends as much on a well-designed scheme of land-assignment calculated to bring about an equitable distribution of agrarian holdings, as on the regularity of the seasons or the efficiency of the measures calculated to increase the output or minimise the dangers arising from floods and other visitations. It is with a view to achieving this object that the revision of the rules regarding the assignment of lands has been taken in hand by me, and the revised rules, in their draft stage, have been published for the criticism of the public. It is also with the same object that the Land Assignment Bill has been introduced in the Legislative Council. Government are not unaware of the adverse criticisms that have been directed against the draft Puduval Rules or of the still stronger opposition to which the draft Land Assignment Bill has been subjected, but Government would venture to state that a good deal of this criticism and opposition is based on an erroneous understanding of the subject and that nothing is farther from the intention of the Government than the creation of facilities to the outsider for the exploitation of land in Travancore or the erection of legal barriers against the reasonable remedies obtainable by the private citizen against the wanton misuse of the powers vested in revenue officials. In emphasising the policy of sale of lands for value in conveniently small blocks, by public auction or otherwise, Government are only following a procedure that has the sanction of long standing usage in this as well as in the neighbouring State of Cochin, and the main object which Government have in view in promulgating the two new measures is the protection of the ignorant ryot from the wily exploiter and the unscrupulous capitalist and to bring him on his feet, for the ultimate benefit of the country, of the industrious dependant and the unfortunate landless. Government hope to issue these measures in their final form with the necessary modifications, after a careful consideration of the several objections raised against them.

**7. Land Records.**—In an attempt to improve the conditions of agricultural industry, a proper system of survey and land records is only a matter of comparatively a short period of years.

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